United Nations A/59/184–S/2004/602

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
27 July 2004

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session
Item 103 of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Letter dated 26 July 2004 from the representatives of Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Our Governments are heartened by the strides made by the United Nations on the issue of protecting children, especially in conflict situations. Indeed, as parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we are fully committed to the protection of children in all aspects pertaining to their well-being and the full enjoyment of their rights.

We have considered carefully your report on children and armed conflict (A/58/546-S/2003/1053) of 10 November 2003 and are greatly interested in the perspectives presented. However, we would like to express our concern regarding the two corrigenda to the report (A/58/546/Corr.1-S/2003/1053/Corr.1 and A/58/546/Corr.2-S/2003/1053/Corr.2), which were issued on 20 February and 19 April 2004, respectively. Furthermore, we are concerned by the Secretariat's use of the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols in indicating a definition of "armed conflict", when these international legal instruments do not provide for an internationally agreed definition of armed conflict. We note that the above-mentioned corrigenda show a double standard in relation to the United Nations work in protecting children and thus undermine the credibility, accuracy and sincerity of the report.

We appreciate the briefings given by Mr. Olara Otunnu, your Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, and we welcome his willingness to engage in a consultation process with Member States, especially those concerned, in the preparation of the next report. We attach particular importance to the consultation process recommended in paragraph 36 (d) of General Assembly resolution 51/77, which aims to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders, including Governments, in ensuring respect for and protection of children's rights.

* A/59/150.

04-44210 (E) 300704

We look forward to the forthcoming report, which we believe should be impartial, accurate, credible, objective and fair, based on reliable and verified information. It is our earnest hope that the next report will not apply double standards and arbitrary considerations in dealing with this issue.

To that end, we hope that the process of preparing the next report will involve, inter alia, Member States, especially those concerned, as well as United Nations country teams. We would appreciate it if the report reflects the views of the Member States concerned. The recommendations of the report should aim to enhance States' capacity to protect children and foster international cooperation in order to improve their conditions.

We are fully confident that, by upholding the principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, rising above political and power considerations, we can all make a significant difference in the lives of the affected children around the world.

We would be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kyaw Tint **Swe**
Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Murari Raj **Sharma**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Nepal to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Lauro L. **Baja,** Jr.
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Bernard Anton Bandara **Goonetilleke**
Acting Permanent Representative of the
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Elfatih Mohamed Ahmed **Erwa**
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Francis K. **Butagira**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Nicolás **Rivas de Zubiría**
Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.